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Department
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Policy paper

2010 to 2015 government policy: research and innovation in health and social care

Updated 8 May 2015

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This is a copy of a document that stated a policy of the 2010 to 2015 Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government.

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[innovation-in-health-and-social-care](#). Current policies can be found at the GOV.UK [policies list](#).

Issue

We want to encourage health research and use of new technologies because it's important to the development of new, more effective treatments for NHS patients.

For example, we think there's more potential to use genomics - analysis of genetic patterns - which is already being used to track the 'superbugs' MRSA and Clostridium difficile, and to treat certain types of cancer.

In a difficult financial environment, we need new approaches if we're going to improve quality and productivity. We think we can get more out of health and social care services if we encourage innovation and base more decisions on evidence about what works.

Research is also important to growth in the UK's life sciences industry - we want to make the UK the best place in the world for health research.

Actions

Making innovation a priority for the NHS

We're making innovation and research a priority for NHS England.

[Innovation, health and wealth: one year on](#), published in December 2012,

sets out how the NHS plans to encourage more innovation.

For example, the NHS will establish 15 [Academic Health Science Networks](#) by April 2014. These networks will help local NHS services find the research and informatics, services, education and training they need to be innovative.

Encouraging more health research

We're providing funding and support to encourage more health research in the UK.

Using evidence to improve health and social care services

From April 2013, part of Public Health England (PHE)'s role will be to advise NHS services, councils and [local health and wellbeing boards](#) on solving public health problems like harmful drinking, smoking and obesity.

PHE will:

- together with local services, identify what works - and provide the NHS with advice based on the evidence
- bring together different sources of data on public health problems, and share that in a form that's as useful as possible for people making decisions about public health

And we want more decisions about social care services to be based on evidence about what works. So from April 2013, we will give the [National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence \(NICE\)](#) responsibility for creating new standards and guidance on approaches to social care, based

on evidence.

Background

The 2005 [research governance framework for health and social care](#) and the [governance arrangements for research ethics committees](#), updated in 2012, set out standards for carrying out research in the NHS.

[‘Best research for best health’](#), the government’s strategy for health research, was published in 2006.

We set out plans for basing more decisions about social care on evidence in the 2010 white paper [‘Caring for our future’](#).

The [‘Strategy for UK life sciences: one year on’](#), published in December 2012, has details of our long-term plans to increase growth in the UK’s life sciences industry. And the Human Genomics Strategy Group published [recommendations for increasing the use of genomics](#) in January 2012.

Who we’re working with

The [Health Research Authority](#) is responsible for protecting and promoting the interests of patients and the public in health research, so more people feel confident enough to take part. And it will also help to make sure that industry sees the UK as a great place to do health research.

Appendix 1: health research

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

Funding research into health and social care

We provide nearly £1 billion a year to help fund health research projects in the NHS, research centres and facilities - mostly through the Department of Health's policy research programme and the [National Institute for Health Research \(NIHR\)](#).

This is in addition to the public funding for medical research paid out through the [Medical Research Council](#) and schemes like the [Small Business Research Initiative](#), which helps to fund smaller businesses' work on healthcare innovations.

Making it easier to carry out health research in the UK

We want to make sure that there are as few barriers as possible to carrying out research in the NHS, while continuing to protect patients' safety and dignity.



So we're publishing new standards for measuring how well hospital trusts carry out research projects. For [example](#), we'll include information on how many trusts are [getting](#) clinical trials started quickly - recruiting the first patients within 70 days. And from 2013, we'll link research funding to performance.

We also help to fund:

- help and advice for academic researchers and companies who want to carry out research within the NHS - for example, help finding suitable people to take part in a clinical trial through the [NIHR Clinical Research Network](#) or help applying for grants from the [NIHR Regional Design Service](#)
- more access to the technology needed to carry out cutting edge medical research - for example, diagnostic imaging
- the [NIHR faculty](#), which provides advice, mentoring and financial help for researchers, and gives them a way of exchanging ideas
- the NIHR's [UK Clinical Trials Gateway website](#) and smartphone app, to give the public more information about clinical trials they could participate in

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